

SEABIRD ISLANDS

No. 117

MacKenzie Island, Archipelago of the Recherche, Western Australia

Location: 34°12'S., 122°06'E.; 40 km south-south-east from Esperance, WA.

Status: Class A Reserve vested in the W.A. Wildlife Authority; entry permit required.

Other Name: Round Island (formerly).

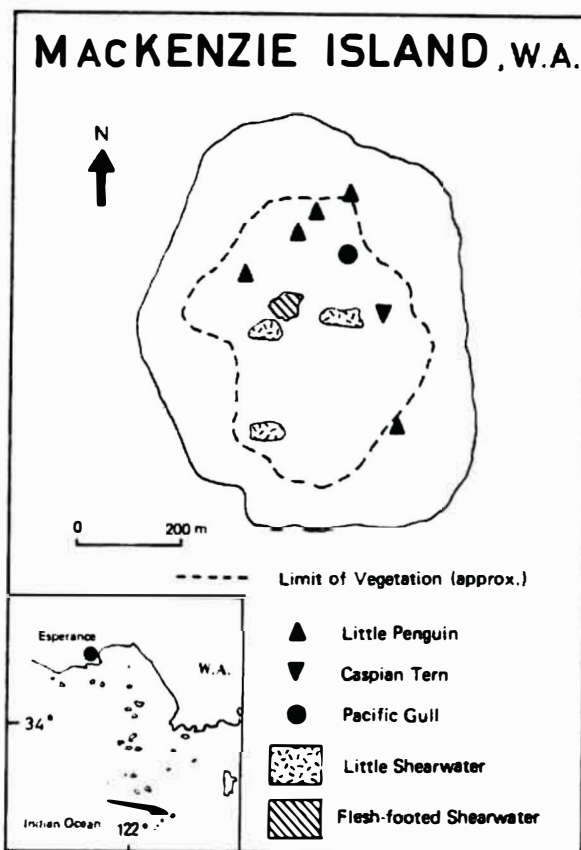
Description: 48 ha; roughly circular, about 900 m in diameter, this granite-gneiss island is shaped like a dome which reaches 28 m at the highest point. There are large areas of bare rock or boulders while the soil in the remaining places is mostly shallow. Generally the vegetation is low with *Carpobrotus*, small plants and some shrubs to about 0.5 m in height. In a few places, clumps of *Melaleuca lanceolata* reach to about two metres high.

Landing: Onto rocks and difficult in all but calm conditions as the island shore is exposed to sea swell from any direction.

Ornithological History: V. N. Serventy² visited the island on 18 November 1950 and found Little Penguins and Pacific Gulls breeding. S. G. Lane and L. F. Lane¹ were on the island for eight hours on 8 November 1981; they recorded details of a further five breeding species and evidence of a sixth. Except where otherwise indicated, the following information was obtained during the visit in 1981.

Breeding Seabirds and Status

Eudyptula minor Little Penguin — Dead young penguins were found in 1950². In 1981, seven nests were seen — ready for eggs, adult incubat-



ing fresh eggs and an adult on an egg and a very small chick.

Puffinus assimilis Little Shearwater — Burrows, almost certainly of these birds, were found in three different locations. Apart from a few old



● *MacKenzie Island (looking south-south-east).*

burrows, 28 appeared to have been recently used. In one of the areas a skull of one of these birds was found. Between 20 and 30 pairs may breed on the island.

Puffinus carneipes Flesh-footed Shearwater — Four old burrows, assumed to belong to this species were found; one contained breast feathers. A skull and the dried remains of a bird were also found.

Haematopus fuliginosus Sooty Oystercatcher — Four pairs appeared to be holding territories. In one of these, part of a recently-hatched egg shell was found and the adults were seen carrying food to a rocky area where the chick apparently was concealed.

Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull — Of some 25 birds present, only one pair showed any breeding behaviour. No nest was located but a chick, almost at flying stage, was eventually discovered hiding under rocks.

Larus pacificus Pacific Gull — Five birds were counted and one pair had a nest ready for eggs.

Hydroprogne caspia Caspian Tern — Two birds were present at a nest with two recently hatched chicks; the egg shells were still close by the nest.

Cereopsis novaehollandiae Cape Barren Goose — Two adults were seen with an almost-flying young bird.

Factors Affecting Status

A number of Sea-lions *Neophoca cinerea* breed on the island and would cause some damage to the breeding birds. King's Skinks *Egernia kingii* were present and would take eggs. A White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* was seen flying around and over



● *Part of the north side (looking west-south-west).*

the island, while two Australian Ravens *Corvus coronoides* were present; both species would cause some predation. Human interference is unlikely because of the remoteness of the island and the difficulty of landing.

Other Seabirds Recorded

Sterna bergii

Crested Tern (remains)

Banding

Larus novaehollandiae — 1 "runner" (9 Nov. 81).

Bibliography

1. Lane, S. G. (1982), 'Avifauna of islands off Esperance, Western Australia', *Corella* 6: 37-39.
2. Serventy, V. N. (1952), The Archipelago of the Recherche, Part 2: Birds. *Aust. Geog. Soc. Rept.* 1(2): 1-24.
3. Willis, J. H. (1953), The Archipelago of the Recherche, Part 3a: Land Flora. *Aust. Geog. Soc. Rept.* 1(3): 1-35.

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